Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS BURDEN OF PROOF

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 22.56.215, the applicant shall substantiate the following:
(Do not provide one word or Yes/No responses. If necessary, attach additional pages.)

A. That the requested development is designed to be highly compatible with the biotic resources present, including the setting aside of appropriate and sufficient undisturbed areas.

PLEASE SEE Attached Pages

B. That the requested development is designed to maintain water bodies, watercourses, and their tributaries in a natural state.

Please see attached Pages

C. That the requested development is designed so that wildlife movement corridors (migratory paths) are left in an undisturbed and natural state.

Please see attached Pages

D. That the requested development retains sufficient natural vegetative cover and/or open spaces to buffer critical resource areas from said requested development.

Please see attached Pages

E. That where necessary, fences or walls are provided to buffer important habitat areas from development.

Please see attached Pages

F. That roads and utilities serving the proposed development are located and designed so as to not conflict with critical resources, habitat areas or migratory paths.

Please see attached Pages

SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS BURDEN OF PROOF

A. That the requested development is designed to be highly compatible with the biotic resources present, including the setting aside of appropriate and sufficient undisturbed areas.

The proposed project is within a rural residential area. Though residential development has impacted the existing oak woodland, the area is still rural. Natural and landscaped oaks provide an abundance of large trees with spreading crowns, and support a variety of characteristic oak woodland plant and animal species (Cooper 2009). The oak woodland on the site, though intact, is not undisturbed; visible impacts include regular control (through spraying) of poison-oak *Toxicodendron diversilobum* (Cooper 2009), as well as the removal of most downed wood, both on the site as well as on adjacent lots on Thrift Rd. Additionally, there is a small fragment of chaparral occurs at the far southern end of the property. This area may have been cleared at one time, and was partially graded; a cement skirt runs from east-west near the back property line, presumably to direct water off the slope after it was altered for construction of neighboring houses (Cooper 2009). Combined these habitats represent natural habitats that support existing biotic resources within the context of a lightly developed rural residential area. The proposed development fits into this context.

In the context of the existing oak woodland as whole, this development will place a 2-story house into the center of the remaining oak grove along Thrift Rd., one that has already been reduced from prior development in the area. With build-out, the applicant proposes a total loss of function on most of the flat area adjacent to the road with 1240 sq ft (12.5%) of lawn, 2700 sq ft (27.25%) of hardscape, 3638 sq ft (36.75%) of landscaped area and 2327 sq ft (23.5%) undeveloped. This includes areas for the structure, pool, deck, driveway and lawn, as well as the removal of 17 of 18 oaks on the property. At the back of property there is an undeveloped slope where a large oak will remain, and thirty-four 8-foot oaks will be planted (E. Makabi pers.comm). In this manner, the property will be developed with similar impacts to the existing biotic community as other residences in the area.

The project will attempt to minimize these impacts through the retention of one large oak and the planting of thirty-four 8-foot oaks. Suggested minimization practices taken from Cooper (2009) for the back slope include, "reducing irrigation, allowing leaves, limbs and other fallen material to remain to serve as cover, minimizing grading and contours to the extent possible." As well as the following measures suggested by Cooper (2009) to minimize impacts to the local flora and fauna.

- "Avoid compaction/trampling of the soil throughout the entire property (this will surely damage the root system of the oaks, which spread out very far from the trunk/ dripline). This includes retaining walls, cement driveways and patios, above ground swimming pools, etc.
- Avoid watering oaks, or any part of the property. Use of native plants in landscaping may require some watering initially, but as this is a mesic, shady site, it shouldn't be hard to keep watering to an absolute minimum.

- Allow understory of oak woodland (and scrub at rear of property) to develop naturally as much as possible, while conforming to fire codes. If clearing vegetation becomes necessary, do so outside the nesting season (e.g., in fall or winter, rather than spring/summer).
- Do not plant invasive non-native landscaping species like Lantana, nasturtium, etc.
- Keep outdoor lighting to a minimum and direct light narrowly and at the ground, preferably on landscaped or built surfaces. Light pollution interferes with hunting owls, foraging poorwills, etc.
- Keep all pets indoors. Cats and dogs kill not only birds, but reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, etc.
- If pets are present, dispose of their waste in the garbage, not on the property (or on adjacent properties). This attracts non-native insects and alters the natural ecosystem.
- Keep pet food outside. This attracts nuisance wildlife and bolsters their numbers in the region.
- Avoid use of bird feeders and nest boxes; instead rely on natural cavities in oaks and naturally-occurring plants."

Overall, the grading and development will impact the biotic resources present, but by retaining large oaks, planting oaks, and minimizing impacts of the development the project, will help to offset some impacts and will be consistent with impacts of the overall residential development in the area.

B. That the requested development is designed to maintain water bodies, watercourses, and their tributaries in a natural state.

There are no water bodies, watercourses or tributaries within the proposed project site (Cooper 2009), therefore, none would be impacted.

C. That the requested development is designed so that wildlife movement corridors (migratory paths) are left in an undisturbed and .natural state.

The project is within an existing residential area (Cooper 2009) and as such, the surrounding area is already compromised as a wildlife movement corridor. As such, development of this property within the context of other residential developments in the area would not impact wildlife movement corridors. The retention of an old oak and planting of young oaks at the back of the property will help to allow the property to retain some connectivity with the adjacent oak canopy.

D. That the requested development retains sufficient natural vegetative cover and/or open spaces to buffer critical resource areas from said requested development.

Most of the property, including oak trees would be cleared. One large oak at the rear of the property will remain as well as thirty-four 8-foot planted oaks, and this would be contiguous with the oak woodland on adjacent properties to the west. Most of the understory would be cleared. Measures described in Question A will also be implemented to minimize impacts to

existing and adjacent biological resources. In this manner, the property will be developed with similar impacts to the existing biotic community as other residences in the area.

E. That where necessary, fences or walls are provided to buffer important habitat areas from development.

The slope that bisects the property will be altered by the construction of a retaining wall at the base of the slope. Boundary walls will be put up on three sides of the property. These will buffer the property from existing natural areas.

F. That roads and utilities serving the proposed development are located and designed so as not to conflict with critical resources; habitat areas or migratory paths.

The project proposes no new roads or utilities other than the driveway and connections serving the residence. Therefore they would not conflict with critical resources; habitat areas or migratory paths.